



Summary of West Australian Results

Australian School Students' Alcohol & Drug Survey, 2005

The eighth national Australian school students' alcohol and drugs (ASSAD) survey was conducted in 2005. It was first administered in 1984 and has since been repeated at three yearly intervals with the aim of providing up to date estimates of the prevalence of smoking and alcohol use among secondary school students. Questions about the use of other drugs were first included in the 1996 survey.

National trends are included in this report to compare West Australian and national averages for the use of alcohol, tobacco and illegal and pharmaceutical of drugs.

In Brief

- Significantly fewer students used cannabis in the last year in 2005 compared to 2002 (19.0% vs 26.8%).
- Fewer students used amphetamines in the last year in 2005 compared to 2002 (6.5% vs 10.3%).
- There were lower rates of use in the last year in 2005 compared to 2002 of other illicit - ecstasy (3.2% vs 4.2%), hallucinogens (2.8% vs 4.3%), cocaine (2.4% vs 3.0%), steroids (1.7% vs 2.0%) and opiates (1.6% vs 2.0%).
- Increase in the proportion of 12-17 year olds in 2005 who drank 'at risk' levels compared to 2002 (26.9% vs 23.3%).
- In the 12-17 year old age group of current drinkers, females were significantly more likely than males to drink 'at risk' levels (29.8% vs 24.3%).
- The lowest smoking prevalence ever recorded in the last week for:
 - 12-15 year olds, down from 19.4% in 1984 to 5.0% in 2005; and
 - 16-17 year olds, down from 27.0% to 9.8%.

Alcohol

When compared to the 2002 WA data, students in 2005 were significantly less likely to have consumed alcohol in the last year (67.0% vs 73.0%), last month (43.5% vs 49.2%) and last week (28.9% vs 33.2%).

'At risk' drinking in last week (current drinkers)

There was, however, an increase in the proportion of 12-17 year old students from 2002 to 2005 who drank at 'at risk' levels, from 23.3% to 26.9%. There was also an increase in the national average of 'at risk' drinking from 2002 to 2005, from 27% to 31%. See Table 1.

The WA 2005 result is almost entirely attributable to the increase of 'at risk' drinking by 12-15 year old females, from 16.1% in 2002 to 24.5% in 2005. Figure 1 (page 2) shows that from 1993 to 2005 'at risk' drinking for both 12 to 15 and 16 to 17 year olds has increased especially for the younger age group.

Table 1
Prevalence (%) of 'at risk' drinking in last week by 12-17 year old students, 2002 - 2005

	2002		2005	
	WA	Aust	WA	Aust
Males	22.1	25	24.3	30
Females	24.9	29	29.8	32
Total	23.3	27	26.9	31

Place alcohol consumed

The most frequently mentioned venues for consuming alcohol of current drinkers are at home (32.7% at own home and 16.3% at friend's home) and at parties (32.4%). Ten percent of 17 year old students reported consuming alcohol in a licensed venue.

Supervision

The majority, nearly two thirds (63.9%) of students, indicated supervision by an adult when they consumed their last alcoholic drink.

However, adult supervision decreased as age increased. For example, 85.4% of 12 year olds had been supervised when they had their last drink compared to 57.1% of 17 year olds.

Written by Greg Swensen (June 2007)

Note: 'At-risk' level of drinking is only defined for adults. There is no current evidence that allows us to state levels of low risk drinking for children. The additional data referred to above is available from the full report: Lang A, O'Donoghue K & Ivery P. *ASSAD alcohol report 2005*. Perth, Drug & Alcohol Office, 2007.

Tobacco

In 2005, the reported prevalence in WA of smoking was the lowest recorded since the survey began in 1984 and involved both students aged 12 to 15 (Table 2) and 16 to 17 (Table 3, page 3) age groups.

In WA older female students (16 to 17 year olds) recorded significantly lower prevalence in 2005, whereas there was little change between 1999 and 2002.

Figure 1
Prevalence (%) of 'at risk' drinking in last week by 12-15 & 16-17 year old students WA, 1993 - 2005

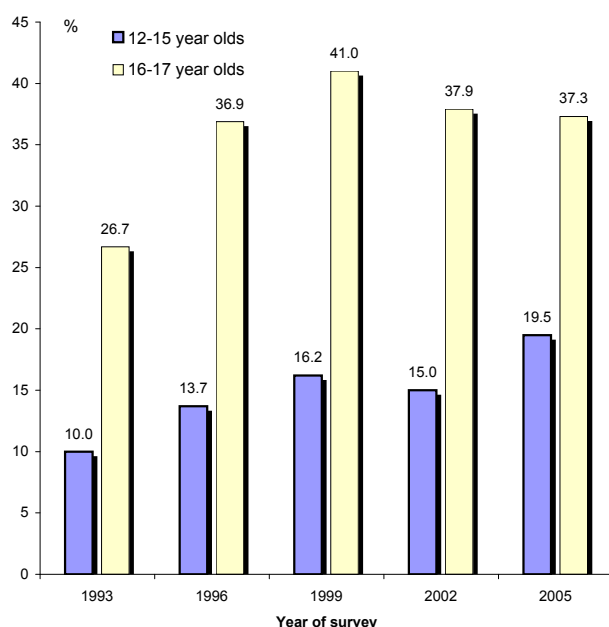


Table 2
Prevalence (%) of smoking among 12-15 year old students, WA, 1984 - 2005

	1984	1987	1990	1993	1996	1999		2002		2005	
						WA	Aust	WA	Aust	WA	Aust
Smoked in last month											
Male	22.9	20.1	22.8	20.0	17.9	17.1	18	10.8	13	5.9	9
Female	25.9	25.5	21.0	19.2	20.5	20.6	20	12.3	16	8.1	10
Total	24.4	22.7	21.9	19.6	19.1	18.8	19	11.5	14	7.0	9
Smoked in last week											
Male	18.1	17.1	19.1	15.5	14.0	13.9	15	8.6	10	4.5	7
Female	20.7	20.8	17.5	15.5	17.4	16.5	16	8.3	12	5.5	7
Total	19.4	18.9	18.3	15.5	15.7	15.2	15	8.4	11	5.0	7

Source: Coase P & Miller J. *ASSAD smoking report 2005*. Perth, Drug & Alcohol Office, 2007.

The 2005 survey reported for the first time in WA the lowest smoking prevalence in the last week ever recorded since 1984 - 12 to 15 year olds (down from 19.4% in 1984 to 5.0% in 2005) and 16 to 17 year olds (down from 27.0% in 1984 to 9.8% in 2005).

Illegal & pharmaceutical drugs

Number of users

A breakdown of the number of 12 to 17 year old students who had used a range of drugs (excluding alcohol or tobacco) in the past year is contained in Table 4 (page 3).

The estimated number of students who had used the five most prevalent drugs was as follows - cannabis (32,800), inhalants (18,100), tranquillisers (17,100), amphetamines (11,200) and non prescribed amphetamines (9,500).

The total of 41,300 students who had used at least one illegal drug is probably due to some young people experimenting with a range of illicit drugs other than cannabis. If exposure to cannabis is included in the definition of 'illicit drug' then in 2005 there was a total of 56,300 students who had used at least one illicit drug over the past year.

Cannabis

In 2005 significantly fewer 12 to 17 year old students reported cannabis use in the last year compared with 2002 (19.0% vs 26.8%). The WA rates were higher than the national rates in 2002 and 2005 (14.2% vs 20.7%). (See Table 5, page 4.)

Amphetamines

In 2005 fewer students reported amphetamines use in the last year compared with 2002 (6.5% vs 10.3%). The WA rates were somewhat higher than the national rates in 2002 and 2005 (4.2% vs 5.0%).

Table 4
Estimated number of 12-17 year old students
who have used drugs (excl. alcohol or tobacco)
in the last year, WA, 2005

	n	%
At least one illegal drug	56,259	32.6
At least one illegal drug (excl. cannabis)	41,245	23.9
Cannabis	32,789	19.0
Inhalants	18,120	10.5
Tranquillisers	17,085	9.9
Amphetamines	11,217	6.5
Amphetamines (non prescribed)	9,492	5.5
Ecstasy	5,522	3.2
Hallucinogens	4,832	2.8
Cocaine	4,142	2.4
Injected drugs	3,797	2.2
Steroids	2,934	1.7
Heroin	2,761	1.6

Non prescribed amphetamines

For the first time (WA only), students were asked about their use of dexamphetamine and other prescribed amphetamine like substances. Overall, 5.5% of students reported using these substances in the last year.

Students who were not prescribed dexamphetamines or Ritalin by their doctor reported they were given them by someone who was prescribed them (24.0%) or received from someone who did not have a prescription for them (17.2%).

Inhalants

In 2005 fewer students reported use of inhalants in the last year compared with 2002 (10.5% vs 12.9%). In both 2002 and 2005 the WA rates were lower than the national rates (12.9% vs 14.9%). For the first time in WA butane use was measured, with 1.0% of 12-17 year olds reporting use in the last year.

Figure 2
Annual prevalence (%) of selected illicit drug use by 12-17 year old students, WA, 1996 - 2005

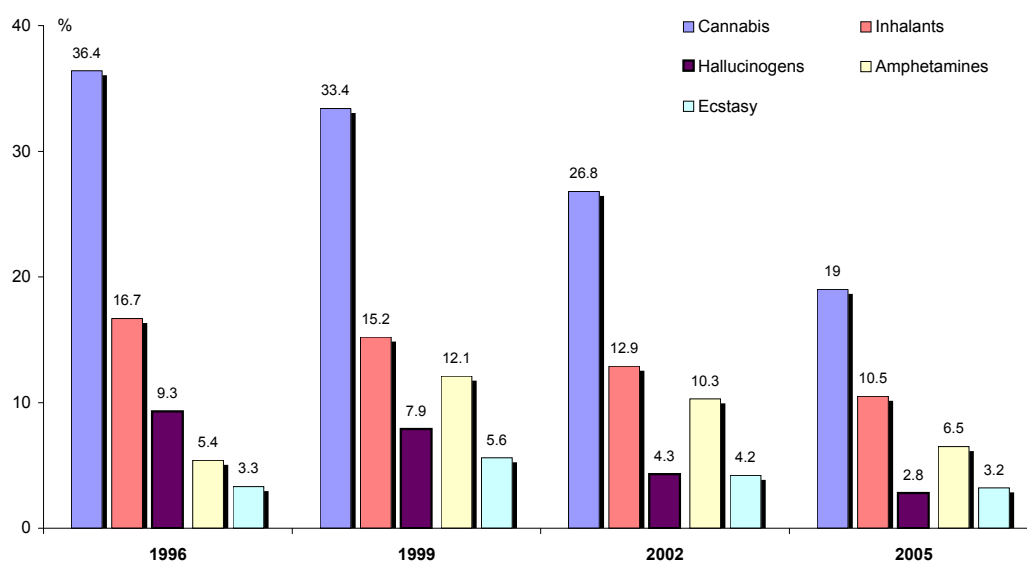


Table 3
Prevalence (%) of smoking among 16-17 year old students, WA, 1984 - 2005

	1984	1987	1990	1993	1996	1999		2002		2005	
						WA	Aust	WA	Aust	WA	Aust
Smoked in last month											
Male	31.8	24.6	29.4	25.5	29.0	27.9	34	18.9	26	13.5	21
Female	37.3	32.6	31.5	29.4	35.3	25.4	36	23.5	30	15.1	23
Total	34.5	28.6	30.4	27.4	32.3	26.6	35	21.1	28	14.3	22
Smoked in last week											
Male	25.2	21.6	25.1	19.6	24.5	22.9	30	14.2	21	8.8	16
Female	28.8	29.3	25.7	24.2	29.2	20.0	29	18.3	25	10.7	17
Total	27.0	25.4	25.4	21.9	26.9	21.4	30	16.1	23	9.8	17

Other drugs

Similar low rates of use in the last year in 2005 were reported in WA and nationally for ecstasy (3.2% vs 3.2%),

hallucinogens (2.8% vs 2.5%), cocaine (2.4% vs 2.2%), steroids (1.7% vs 2.0%) and opiates (1.6% vs 1.7%). (See Table 5.)

Table 5
Prevalence (%) of last year drug use among 12-17 year old students, 1996 - 2005

	1996		1999		2002		2005	
	WA	Aust	WA	Aust	WA	Aust	WA	Aust
Cannabis								
Males	39.2	35.2	34.9	26.6	28.9	22.8	20.2	15.6
Females	33.6	29.8	31.9	22.7	24.5	18.6	17.7	12.9
Total	36.4	32.4	33.4	24.6	26.8	20.7	19.0	14.2
Inhalants								
Males	16.5	18.3	14.4	18.7	12.3	14.1	10.5	12.8
Females	17.0	18.9	16.0	19.7	13.5	15.6	10.5	13.1
Total	16.7	18.6	15.2	19.2	12.9	14.9	10.5	12.9
Amphetamines								
Males	6.1	5.6	13.1	6.0	10.1	5.3	6.1	4.9
Females	4.7	4.0	11.2	5.1	10.6	4.7	7.0	3.4
Total	5.4	4.8	12.1	5.5	10.3	5.0	6.5	4.2
Ecstasy								
Males	3.7	3.5	5.9	3.5	4.2	3.7	3.3	3.7
Females	2.9	2.1	5.3	2.7	4.1	3.0	3.1	2.6
Total	3.3	2.8	5.6	3.1	4.2	3.3	3.2	3.2
Hallucinogens								
Males	10.1	7.6	8.4	5.4	5.5	3.8	3.7	3.5
Females	8.4	5.9	7.5	4.3	3.0	2.6	1.9	1.5
Total	9.3	6.7	7.9	4.9	4.3	3.1	2.8	2.5
Cocaine								
Males	2.3	3.2	4.2	2.9	3.2	2.8	2.6	2.8
Females	2.1	1.8	2.7	2.1	2.7	1.7	2.2	1.6
Total	2.2	2.4	3.5	2.7	3.0	2.2	2.4	2.2
Steroids								
Males	1.6	2.1	3.4	2.7	2.4	2.6	2.0	2.6
Females	0.4	0.7	1.7	1.3	1.6	1.5	1.3	1.4
Total	1.0	1.4	2.5	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.7	2.0
Opiates								
Males	2.5	3.1	4.1	2.9	2.2	2.4	2.2	2.0
Females	2.2	2.0	2.7	2.4	1.7	1.5	1.0	1.4
Total	2.3	2.5	3.4	2.6	2.0	1.9	1.6	1.7

Source: Miller J & Lang A. ASSAD drug report 2005. Perth, Drug & Alcohol Office, 2007; Department of Health, Population Health Division & Centre for Behavioural Research in Cancer, Anti Cancer Council of Victoria. Drug use among 12-17 year old Western Australian school students in 1999: A summary report. Perth: Population Health Division, Department of Health, 2002.

To view or download detailed data tables and figures and a description of the methodology associated with this report go to the Drug and Alcohol Office website here.

This publication is available online at
<http://www.dao.health.wa.gov.au>